

Upper Snake Region

The Upper Snake Region was home to 2 documented resident, 2 documented border, and 1 suspected resident packs during 2005 (Figure 12; Table 7). While both Copper Basin and Biscuit Basin packs reproduced, only the Biscuit Basin pack qualified as a breeding pair; lethal control removed all breeding-age wolves from the Copper Basin pack and thus precluded them from breeding pair status. A male wolf, B260, was caught in a coyote trap between Challis and Arco, Idaho. This wolf was radio collared and released on site; however, it was found dead weeks later and its cause of death was under investigation by USFWS Law Enforcement. The primary source of mortality was lethal control ($n = 11$), followed by other human causes ($n = 1$), unknown causes ($n = 1$), and natural causes ($n = 1$). Confirmed and probable cattle losses were attributed to the Copper Basin pack, as well as B193, a disperser from the Buffalo Ridge pack. There were no confirmed or probable sheep losses. One wolf was captured and radio collared after being caught in a coyote trap, but this wolf died shortly thereafter.

Documented Resident Packs

Biscuit Basin

The Biscuit Basin pack was founded in 2004 by a dispersing female wolf from Wyoming's Nez Perce pack. The Biscuit Basin pack bred in the Madison-Firehole area of Yellowstone National Park in 2004, then moved west into Idaho and settled in the Warm River area in 2005. The alpha female, 340F, and a young male, 474M, were radio collared. The radio collar of a third pack member, 476F, was collected from the Fall River in July 2005. Telemetry locations and ground observations indicated this pack ranged from the Fall River north to Black Canyon. Two pups were documented in July and a December aerial observation documented a minimum of 7 individuals. The Biscuit Basin pack was counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Copper Basin

The Copper Basin pack was documented in 2004 when 2 wolves were radio collared in response to livestock depredations in the area. Aerial monitoring of these wolves, suspected alpha male B224 and subadult female B227, indicated this pack denned in Copper Basin and ground observations determined 2 pups were present in 2005. This pack's home range coincides with an area containing a large concentration of cattle. As in 2004, this pack depredated on cattle during summer 2005. Given their history of repeated depredations, 9 wolves were lethally removed, including B224, to alleviate livestock losses. B227 was not lethally removed with the hope she would care for the surviving pups. Monitoring flights in fall 2005 indicated she was traveling with 2 uncollared wolves, presumably the pups. Furthermore, female wolf B197, a dispersing Morgan Creek pack member, which had been missing for several months, was also located with the 3 Copper Basin wolves. Because of wolf control measures, this pack did not contain breeding adults at the end of the year and was not counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Documented Border Packs

Bechler (WY)

The Bechler pack was a Wyoming-documented pack that occasionally used the Idaho side of the state border near Driggs, Idaho.

The Driggs/Teton pack was a Wyoming-documented pack that occasionally crossed the Wyoming border into Idaho.

Suspected Resident Packs

Bishop Mountain

Bishop Mountain was a suspected newly-formed group of wolves that appeared to be derived from the Nez Perce pack of Yellowstone National Park. There were no radio collars in this group, and they did not appear to localize; therefore, reproduction was not verified.

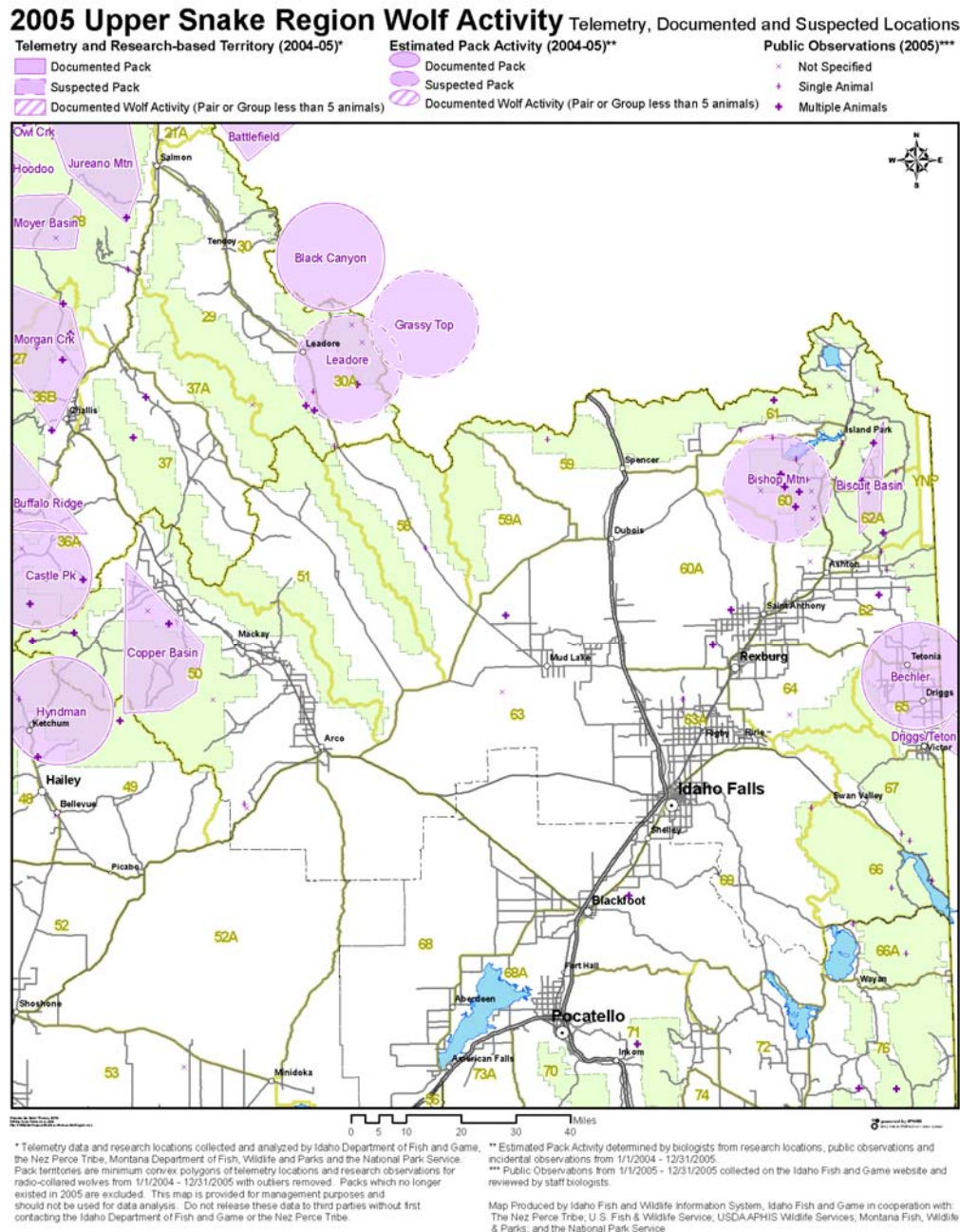


Figure 12. Wolf pack activity and observations in the Upper Snake Region, 2005.

Table 7. Estimated pack size, reproductive status, mortality, dispersal, monitoring status, and livestock depredation for documented and suspected wolf packs within Idaho Department of Fish and Game Upper Snake Region, 2005.

Wolf pack or group	Min. no. wolves observed ^a	Reproductive status			Documented & suspected mortalities					Monitoring status			Confirmed & probable wolf- caused livestock losses		
		Min. no. pups prod.	Reprod. packs	Breeding pairs ^b	Natural	Control ^c	Other human ^d	Unknown ^e	Known dispersal	Active radio collars	Number wolves captured ^f	Number wolves missing ^g	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs
Documented															
Bechler (WY) ^h															
Biscuit Basin	7	2	yes	yes	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Copper Basin	4	2	yes	no	0	9	0	0	0	2	0	0	8	0	0
Driggs/Teton (WY) ^h															
Disperser					0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Subtotal	11	4			0	10	1	0	0	4	0	0	9	0	0
Suspected															
Bishop Mountain	4	?	?	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Unknown					1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Subtotal	4				1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Regional total	15	4			1	11	1	1	0	4	1	1	9	0	0

^a Number of wolves observed by wolf program personnel in 2005. Sum of this column does not equate to number of wolves estimated to be present in the population.

^b Breeding pairs are the measure of Federal and State wolf recovery and management goals. A breeding pair is defined as “an adult male and an adult female wolf that have produced at least 2 pups that survive until December 31 of the year of their birth...”.

^c Includes agency lethal control and legal take by landowners.

^d Includes all other human-related deaths.

^e Does not include pups that disappeared before winter.

^f Includes all wolves captured during 2005. Most, but not all, were radio-collared.

^g Radio-collared wolves that became missing in 2005.

^h Border pack officially tallied to (state); territory known or likely shared with Idaho. Data on these packs can be found in Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery 2005 Interagency Annual Report.